

REMARKS

Claims 1-4, 7-10, and 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(s) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,058,435 issued to Sassin et al., (hereinafter Sassin) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,771,765 issued to Crowther (hereinafter Crowther). Claims 5-6, 11-12, and 19-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sassin in view of Crowther and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,915,011 issued to Miloslavsky (hereinafter Miloslavsky). In light of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of all pending claims.

Independent Claim 1 has been amended to make clear that assignments of the one or more agents to handle the first and second request, is based on the media formats of the first and second request and the media format associated with the communication channels that each of the one or more agents is preauthorized by the system administrator to access. In rejecting the independent claims, including independent Claim 1, the Office Action asserts that column 7, lines 20-40 and lines 54-65 teach the act of assigning agents to handle tasks. Applicants have reviewed column 7, lines 20-40 and lines 54-65 and can find no teaching or fair suggestion of the foregoing limitations of Claim 1. Column 7, lines 20-40 and lines 54-65 recite:

For each incoming communication received from one of the user interfaces 14, 16, 20, 22 and 26, the associated content analyzer 30 and 32 outputs information indicative of the skills that are advantageous to processing the incoming communication. Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, this information is received at a skills correlation device 44 of a dynamic skills-based router 46. A second input to the correlation device 44 is the output from a skills inventory database 48 that includes resume data indicative of proficiencies of the agents with respect to various skills advantageous to processing typical incoming communications. The correlation device determines a "best fit" between the communications-handling skills identified at the content analyzer 30 and 32 and the connectivity options available to the system 10. In the preferred embodiment, the system is an ACD system and the "best fit" is a determination of the appropriate ACD agent for handling the communication.

At least partially based upon the resume data contained in the skills inventory database 48 and the identified communications-handling skills of the content analyzer, the incoming communications are routed to the agents on a one-by-one basis.

In the ACD application of FIG. 2, a number of agent stations 50, 52, 54 and 56 are shown as being connected to the switch circuitry 18 described above. With regard to the incoming communications, the assignment of ACD agents is based upon the skills correlation determined at the device 44 and is controlled by a communications dispatcher 57. In the preferred embodiment, each agent station supports communications with a number of the user interfaces 14, 16, 20, 22 and 26. For example, each station may include a telephone and a computer that supports facsimile and electronic mail transmissions, as well as video transmissions and connectivity via the Internet.

The foregoing paragraphs of Sassin describe a technique in which incoming communications (e.g., requests) are assigned to agents for handling. The foregoing paragraphs make clear that incoming communications are assigned based upon skills “advantageous to processing of the incoming communication.” In contrast, the foregoing limitations of independent Claim 1 focus on assigning the first and second requests based upon the “media formats” of the first and second request in addition to assigning the first and second requests based on the “media formats” associated with the communication channels that each agent is preauthorized by the system administrator to access. Applicants believe the Examiner has made a distinction between assigning requests based upon skills of the agent that are advantageous to processing the incoming communications and media formats of the incoming requests. At the very least, because column 7, lines 20-40 and lines 54-65 of Sassin fails to teach or fairly suggest assigning the first and second requests based on the “media formats” associated with the communication channels, Applicants assert that independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the cited sections of Sassin and Crowther.

Independent Claims 7 and 15 have been amended to include limitations similar to the limitations added to independent Claim 1. Given that independent Claims 7 and 15 were rejected based upon the same rationale for rejecting independent Claim 1, it follows that independent Claims 7 and 15 are patentably distinguishable over the cited sections of Sassin and Crowther for the same reasons that independent Claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the cited sections of Sassin and Crowther. The remaining claims depend directly or indirectly from independent Claims 1, 7, and 15. Insofar as the independent claims have been shown to be patentably distinguishable, it follows that the dependent claims are likewise patentably distinguishable.

In the Office Action (Response to Arguments), the Examiner cites to column 3, line 55 through column 4, line 2 of Crowther as teaching independent Claim 1's limitation of determining the media formats associated with the communication channels that each agent is authorized to access. It is noted that Applicants have amended this limitation so that it now reads determining the media formats associated with the communication channels that each agent is preauthorized by a system administrator to access. Applicants assert that a clear distinction exists between the foregoing limitation and that which is described in column 3, line 55 through column 4, line 2 of Crowther. More specifically, the foregoing section of Crowther describes an agent manager 116 which knows, among other things, the type of media that agents can handle (e.g., voice calls, emails, web forms, etc.). As an example, this cited section of Crowther describes:

If an agent only logs in from a telephone set, then the agent can answer voice calls and initiate outgoing calls, but cannot respond to emails or web forms. If the agent logs in from a telephone and a computer or a computer having telephonic capabilities, then the agent can perform all of the aforementioned actions. This information is detected when the agent logs in.

At best, the foregoing describes an act of determining the media formats associated with the communication channels that the agent has authorized to access based upon the communication channels that the agent has logged into. The foregoing suggests Crowther is concerned with the actual communication channels the agent is logged into rather than the communication channels the agent is preauthorized to log into. As such, Applicants assert that column 3, line 55 through column 4, line 2 of Crowther does not teach or fairly suggest "determining, the one or more agents to handle the first and second request based upon the media formats of the first and second request and the media formats associated with the communication channels that each agent of one or more agents is preauthorized by the system administrator to access."

CONCLUSION

Applicants submit that all claims are now in condition for allowance, and an early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited. Nonetheless, should any issues remain that might be subject to resolution through a telephonic interview, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned.

If any extensions of time under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a) are required in order for this submission to be considered timely, Applicant hereby petitions for such extensions. Applicant also hereby authorizes that any fees due for such extensions or any other fee associated with this submission, as specified in 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17, be charged to deposit account 502306.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric A. Stephenson
Attorney for Applicants
Reg. No. 38,321
Telephone: (512) 439-5093
Facsimile: (512) 439-5099